

JOURNAL OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY  
AND LEADERSHIP

HUMAN RESOURCES  
& DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

# **The 1<sup>st</sup> International Scientific Conference on the Challenges of Contemporary Management in the Global Economy: Leadership, Strategies, Social Responsibility**

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/JCRL.2017.006>

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The 1<sup>st</sup> International Scientific Conference *The challenges of contemporary management in the global economy: Leadership, strategies, social responsibility* was held on 13–14 March 2017 in Toruń, Poland. The conference was organised by the Department of Business Excellence, the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland as an event of the Welconomy Forum 2017. The aim of the conference was to present, analyse and discuss the issues related to:

- *Leadership* including: contemporary concepts of leadership, roles played by top, middle and first line managers, challenges (both external and intra-organisational) faced by leaders

in business organisations, the public sector, and non-profit organisations;

- *Strategies* including: corporate, business and functional strategies, business models, organisational strategies in the public sector and non-profit organisations;
- *Social responsibility* to employees, organisations in business environment, society and the natural environment.

The topic and the scope of the conference were related to the studies conducted by now and then researchers of the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management, Nicolaus Copernicus University in the fields of leadership (cf. Karaszewski, 2008; Karaszewski and Skrzypczyńska, 2016), strategic management (Godziszewski, 2001; Stankiewicz, 2002) and corporate social responsibility (cf. Karaszewski, Karwacka and Paluszek (Eds.), 2011). The idea of the conference was to discuss the aforementioned issues through the lens of positive management which became one of major avenues of research at the Faculty (cf. Stankiewicz (Ed.), 2010; Stankiewicz (Ed.), 2013) and has been recently receiving increasing attention as the context for studies on leadership and corporate social responsibility (Karaszewski and Lis, 2014a; 2014b; 2016; Lis, Czerniachowicz and Wieczorek-Szymańska, 2017). The idea of the event was in line with other conferences held by the community of researchers inspired by the ideas of positive organisational scholarship and positive management (cf. Lis, 2014; 2016).

The first paper session, chaired by Dr Małgorzata Gotowska (UTP University of Science and Technology, Bydgoszcz) and Dr Kamila Skrzypczyńska (Nicolaus Copernicus University), focused the attention of participants on the issues of corporate social responsibility. Prof. Zygmunt Waśkowski (Poznań University of Economics and Business) examined the aspects of corporate responsibility in the process of creating customer value in the context of information asymmetry. He claimed that the negative influence of information asymmetry on engaging customers in value creation may result in decrease in customer satisfaction and terminating their relationship with a company. Dr Renata Pisarek (The University of Łódź) presented social responsibility initiatives undertaken by airports and airlines. First, she used the case of Virgin Airlines to present the comprehensive CSR philosophy in the airlines industry. Then, she provided the examples of charity and social activities towards the society implemented in KLM, Iberia, JetBlue airlines and the Frankfurt airport. Natalia Kurek (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin) discussed

the relationships between the concepts of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. Monika Szewczyk (The University of Łódź) analysed the barriers and challenges for implementing CSR ideas in textile and apparel industries. She focused her attention on environmental issues and corporate responsibility to employees, including the workers of subcontractors in the industry value chain. Anna Wiśniewska and Paweł Cegliński (both Nicolaus Copernicus University) investigated the case study of Polpharma to exemplify how corporate social activity may contribute to developing and strengthening firm competitive advantage. They came to the conclusion that there are three prerequisites required to effectively use CSR to build up competitive advantage i.e. combining CSR initiatives with economic pragmatism, making CSR a part of a firm strategy and orienting social activity to increase the level of stakeholders' trust to the company and, in consequence, its reputation. In their paper, Katarzyna Turoń and Prof. Piotr Czech (both Silesian University of Technology) examined the issue of circular economy in the transportation industry. They supported their theoretical discussion with the case study analysis of the circular economy concept implementation in DHL company.

The second paper session was chaired by Dr Adam Handzelewicz and Dr Andrzej Lis (both Nicolaus Copernicus University). The paper submitted by Dr Joanna Hernik (West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin) and Prof. Antonio Minguez Vera (The University of Murcia, Spain) provided theoretical and conceptual considerations on idealised composition of a board of directors. The authors used the case of the fictitious limited liability company manufacturing garden furniture to analyse how the composition of the board could be changed to reflect the shifts in employment structure, and the structure of the market (from regional, through national to international market). Dr Arkadiusz Malkowski (West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin) discussed the opportunities and challenges in developing competitiveness of borderline regions. Embedding his study in the context of EU policies for regional competitiveness development he focused analysis on the case of voivodeships located in Eastern Poland. Dr Mateusz Tomanek and Daria Pałucka (both Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented the role of leadership in sports clubs and the role of women in international sports organisations.

The third paper session chaired by Prof. Bohdan Godziszewski (WSB University in Toruń) and Prof. Monika Chodorek (Nicolaus

Copernicus University) covered issues related to various aspects of strategic management. Dr Andrzej Lis and Prof. Agata Sudolska (both Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented the findings from the study on absorptive capacity and its role for creating innovations and building company competitive advantage (cf. Lis and Sudolska, 2015). Their presentation focused on organisational routines, mechanisms and best practices for developing firm absorptive capacity identified through case study analysis in Frauenthal Automotive Toruń company. Dr Valentyna Ksendzuk and Dr Olena Syvak (both Zhytomyr State Technological University, Ukraine) analysed currency risks in foreign trade as challenges for managing companies in Poland and Ukraine. First of all, they examined the current status of foreign trade in the countries under the study. Then, they identified the types of currency risks. Finally, they discussed Polish and Ukrainian approaches to non-financial reporting and risk management techniques. Dr Anna Jasiulewicz (Warsaw University of Life Sciences) presented the findings of her studies on ethnocentrism in the marketing strategies of discount chains and its importance for consumers. She compared and contrasted strategies of various discount chains operating in the Polish market and focused on thorough analysis of techniques and approaches implemented by Jeromino Martins Polska S.A. i.e. the owner of Biedronka discount chain. Her findings proved effectiveness of ethnocentric marketing strategy implemented by Biedronka. Dagmara Golba (Jagiellonian University in Kraków) studied the role and use of technology for the implementation of the work-life balance concept. She discussed among others the issues of increasing work efficiency and engagement, and improving the creativity and initiative of employees. Wioleta Gawęł (Cracow University of Economics) discussed the forms of cooperation between academia and business. The analysis included among others the research services provided by academia by the order of the business and spin-off ventures. Patrycja Gulak-Lipka, Joanna Michalak and Jarosław Wojtas (all representing Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented the conclusions and recommendations from the review of literature on cultural and sociological context in analysis of data from social media. The study included the examples of the ways of using social media in Asia Pacific, Europe and America regions. Joanna Świątek (Polish Academy of Sciences) discussed the issue of cooperation between business and NGOs. She applied the case study analysis of companies cooperating with WIOS-NA Association. This collaboration is based on the following principles:

social marketing, sales activation mechanisms, employee volunteering, event sponsorship, social investor, product and service delivery. Finally, Leszek Warzecha (University of Gdańsk) examined marketing strategies of guitar manufacturers. His study covered the variety of approaches implemented in such companies as: Fender (USA), Gibson (USA), Ernie Ball Music Man (USA), Ibanez (Japan) and Skervesen Guitars (Poland). The catalogue of identified marketing techniques included: boasting of the company history, cooperating with celebrities playing guitar, accentuating craftsmanship and artistry and using social media.

The conference offered a great opportunity for exchanging experience and views among researchers. Sometimes, the intensity and temperature of debates and discussions was extremely high, but all of them were conducted in a positive working environment conducive to sharing knowledge and generating new ideas. In order to disseminate the research findings and ideas presented at the conference, the submitted and positively reviewed papers will be published in *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership*. As declared by Scientific and Organizational Committees the conference is planned to be conducted on the yearly basis as an event of the Welconomy Forum. The second edition will be held in March 2018.

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